whether this obligation is applicable to the foreign banks also; and

if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) As per guidelines of Reserve Bank of India on priority sector lending programme, the domestic commercial banks are required to lend 18% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) or credit equivalent amount of Off-Balance Sheet Exposure to agriculture sector. As per provisional figures, as on 29.02.2008, during the year 2007-08, the public sector banks have disbursed Rs. 1,01,889.32 crore to agriculture sector.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The foreign banks, operating in India, are required to lend 32% of their ANBC or credit equivalent amount of Off-Balance Sheet Exposure, whichever is higher, to priority sector. However, there is no target stipulated for agriculture sector, keeping in view the fact that the foreign banks have no rural branch network.

Sixth Pay Commission

3769. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

whether Government has received the report and recommendations from the Sixth Pay Commission;

if so, the salient anomalies detected, if any, in its recommendations;

whether it is a fact that chiefs of three wings of Indian Armed Forces called on Government and personally registered their disappointment against the recommendations made by the Commission pertaining to members of Defence Services;

if so, brief details of the points of their resentment;

whether the same are being addressed to by Government;

if so, the details thereof; and

if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

The recommendations of the Sixth Central Pay Commission are under examination of the Government.

and (d) The Chiefs of the Staff Committee comprising three Service Chiefs submitted a Joint Services Memorandum on recommendations of the Sixth Central Pay Commission which contains 14 issues pertaining to pay scales, Military Service Pay, pension, gratuity, etc.

(e) to (g) The same are under examination of the Government.

Honours for highest income-tax payers

3770. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the highest income tax payers in the country are honoured or given any awards;

(b) the names of highest individual income tax payers in the last three assessment years;

(c) the names of highest income tax paying companies/firms etc. in the last three assessment years; and

(d) the quantum of tax paid by such- individuals/companies etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) A scheme called 'SAMMAN Scheme' to recognise the highest income tax payers in the country was announced by the then Finance Minister in his budget speech on 1.6.1998. Under the Samman Scheme, highest individual income-tax payers were given awards at national level in respect of assessment years 1998-99 and 1999-2000 at New Delhi and Kolkata on 07-04-2000 and 29-01-2002 respectively. Awards at regional level for these Assessment years were also given by the respective regional authorities. Thereafter, no such awards have been given.

(b) to (d) A Statement indicating the names of three each highest individual and corporate tax payers during the last three Assessment Years is given below.

Statement

The names of highest individual and corporate tax payers during last three assessment years

Assessment Year 1.4.2005 to 31.3.2006

(Rupees in crores)

SI. No.	Name of the Corporate Tax Payers	Amount of Tax Paid
1	Oil and Natural Gas. Corp. Ltd.	9342.51
2	Life Insurance Corp. Ltd.	4214.67
3	NTPC Ltd.	296.40
SI. No.	Name of the Individual Tax Payers	Amount of Tax Paid
1	Martin Sandhiyagu	30.11
2	Goud Hirehal Gaviappa Rangan	24.74
3	Joshi Jagdishprasad Mohanlal	24.70

Assessment Year 1.4.2006 to 31.3.2007

SI. No.	Name of the Corporate Tax Payers	Amount of Tax Paid
1	Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd.	12963.15
2	NTPC Ltd.	4674.52
3	State Bank of India	4520.06
SI. No.	Name of the Individual Tax Payers	Amount of Tax Paid
1	Gopalakrishnan Sudha	47.71
2	Nilekani Nandan Mohan	40.81
3	Murty Sudha Narayana	36.40

Assessment Year 1.4.2007 to 31.3.2008

SI. No.	Name of the Corporate Tax Payers	Amount of Tax Paid
1	Oil and Natural Gas Corrp. Ltd.	10086.88
2	National Stock Exchange of India Ltd	6576.25
3	Indian Oil Corp. Ltd.	4962.76

SI. No.	Name of the Individual Tax Payers	Amount of Tax Paid
1	Bhatia Kapil	121.41
2	Shah Hemand Jadavji	87.06
3	Shah Usha Atul	86.73

Registration of Credit Card providers with RBI

3771. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

whether RBI plans to chalk out regulations for companies engaged in their credit card business and proposes to make it mandatory to all players to register themselves with Central bank prior to operating as issuers;

whether any regulations in this regard have been worked out;

whether at present major credit card providers like Visa and Master Card are operating with banks through no time-frame;

whether after passing the Payment and Settlement Act, 2007 in Parliament regulations have not been so far framed; and

by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House to the extent available.

Excise duty exemptions for investments in Kutch

3772. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

whether Government is aware that 409 medium and large units which have made investment in Kutch, the earthquake affected area, however, could not go into production by 31st December, 2005 and, therefore, they could not get the benefit of excise duty exemption;

whether it is a fact that the State Government of Gujarat has requested for granting benefit of excise package to such pipeline cases on the line of benefit given to the units in Sales Tax package declared by the State Government of Gujarat; and

if so, the decision of Central Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Government had received a large number of representation